



## **AVIAN INFLUENZA**

**What is Avian Influenza:**

Avian Influenza (bird flu) is an infection caused by avian (bird) influenza (flu) viruses. These flu viruses occur naturally among birds. Wild birds worldwide carry the virus in their intestines, but usually do not get sick from them. However, bird flu is very contagious among birds and sometimes can make some domesticated birds, including chickens, ducks, and turkeys, very sick and kill them.

**Signs and Symptoms:**

Symptoms of bird flu are similar to flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches). Other symptoms that have been reported include eye infections, pneumonia, severe respiratory distress, and other life-threatening complications.

**Transmission:**

The risk of bird flu in humans is very low, but several cases of human infection have occurred since 1997. Most human cases of bird flu infection have resulted from contact with infected poultry or contaminated surfaces. Rarely, bird flu can acquire the ability to be spread directly from person-to-person which can lead to a flu pandemic (world-wide epidemic).

**Treatment:**

Prescription medicines approved for human flu viruses should work, but the flu virus could become resistant and not work. There is no vaccine currently available.

**Diagnosis:**

A laboratory test is needed to detect avian flu in humans.

**What can you do?**

Hand-washing and good hygiene is recommended. Avoid contact with infected birds or contaminated surfaces and be careful when handling and cooking poultry.

**Whom do you call?**

Delaware Division of Public Health: 1-888-295-5156

**For more information:**

Visit the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/> or the Division of Public Health website: <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/avianflu.html>